



## *State of Wyoming Military Department Office of the Adjutant General*

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### **30<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron settles in at Wyoming Air National Guard**

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - The U.S. Air Force has proven active duty and citizen Airmen can successfully operate together daily with the right amount of communication and the right amount of heart - just ask the Airmen of the 30<sup>th</sup> and 187<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadrons at the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing.

The arrangement is called an Active Associate. It combines active duty 30<sup>th</sup> AS Airmen operating under the direction of the Wyoming Air National Guard, flying Wyoming Air Guard C-130 cargo planes alongside Air National Guard crewmembers. It's the first of its kind for the Air Force's Air Mobility Command and the unit just hit a major milestone.

The active duty personnel flew through the first of three manning phases to becoming a fully deployable unit, months ahead of schedule.

Although it took active duty and National Guard command years to come up with the agreements outlining the active associate concept, it only took a month for the active duty crews to start flying with the Wyoming Guard crews on Wyoming planes.

Currently, the 30<sup>th</sup> AS has 70 pairs of boots on the ground, including four air crews, which are fully integrated in the C-130 cargo plane operations and maintainer units at the Wyoming Air Guard Base in Cheyenne, Wyo.

"Like all new relationships, there are bumps in the road, but we quickly address each issue as it comes up," Lt. Col. Steven Hopkins, 30<sup>th</sup> AS commander, said. "I'm pleased we're ahead of schedule to ensure aircrew proficiency."

"Some people see the active associate as an experiment, we see it as a way to make sure the nation gets the most out of its airplanes, air crews and tax dollars," 153<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing Commander Col. Harold Reed said. "Mixing the two unique military cultures is producing a better Airman and a better way of doing business."

"Phasing in the number of active duty Airmen allowed both sides to prove to the other that we're all very capable at accomplishing the mission together," Hopkins said. "We made it our focus to bring all our new members into the unit and qualify them in minimum time. That attitude and focus allowed us to get more than one-third of our crewmembers ready to fly in a short amount of time."

The Wyoming Air Guardsmen welcomed their active duty brethren on missions during Operation Coronet Oak, just a few months after the 30<sup>th</sup> AS stand-up ceremony in July. Coronet Oak is tasked to Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units, providing airlift support to U.S. Southern Command. When the 153rd Airlift Wing's turn to support came, there were mixed crews on the Wyoming Air Guard planes.

Another opportunity for the 30<sup>th</sup> AS crews to prove their skills came October 19, during a 187<sup>th</sup> Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron training flight. The 30 AS filled every flight crew position with an active duty crewmember.

"This is exactly the extended capability and mutual benefit that we were seeking when we established this association," Hopkins said.

Up next, 55 more active duty members will mix in with the Wyoming Air National Guard by February. There will be more joint deployments and aerial fire fighting training for the active duty unit.